Enforcement of ban on mining activity in Aravalli Range

169. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have appointed any committee to ensure the enforcement of ban on mining activity in Aravalli Range including Sariska Tiger Reserve;

(b) whether the committee has been directed to assess the damage done to the environment, ecology and wildlife by the mining activity carried on in that area;

(c) if so, the details of the observations/recommendations made by the committee;

(d) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto; and

(e) the progress of the afforestation projects for the Aravalli Hills taken up so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Supreme Court has appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi to go into the issues concerning the enforcement of the notifications issued under various laws for the protection of the forests and the wildlife, including the banning of mining operations as ordered by the Court and the assessment of damage and remedial measures, within the protected areas of the Sariska Tiger Reserve which falls under the Aravalli Range. In addition, the Central Government have, with a view to regulate certain activities that cause environmental degradation, including mining, notified the Gurgaon district of Haryana and the Alwar district of Rajasthan which fall under the Aravalli Range under the Environment (Protection), Act 1986. The Central Government have also constituted a Committee to appraise the development projects from the environmental angle in these districts in the context of the notification issued under the Environment (Protection), Act 1986.

(c) The Committee appointed by the Supreme Court has made an interim report on 28-9-92 and requested the Supreme Court to allow a period of three months to enable it to make its recommendations regarding the provision of alternative mining areas for the balance expiry period of the lessees and the assessment of the damage done to the environment, as well as, the remedial measures required to be undertaken. The matter is still under consideration of the Court. The committee appointed by the Central Government on 4-12-92 is to start its work shortly.

(d) In view of the reply given in answer to part (a), (b) and (c) above, the question does not arise at this stage.

(e) The afforestation of the Aravalli Hills is a continuing activity undertaken by the State Government on an annual basis keeping in view of the availability of funds, including the funds provided by the Central Government. However, the Government have taken special steps to afforest and develop the Aravalli Hills through the implementation of externally aided project, viz. "Rehabilitation of Common Lands in the Aravalli Hills in Haryana" for which the assistance is being provided by the European Economic Community (EEC), and the "Afforestation Projects for Aravalli Hills, Rajasthan" for which assistance is being provided by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan.

Delhi Pollution Control Board

170. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:
SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: